

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/06/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R002000190020-4

Next 2 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2005/06/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R002000190020-4

CIA/ONE/STAFF MEM/35-61

Approved For Release 2005/06/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R002000190020-4

SECRET/NOFORN

3344

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

12 July 1961

STAFF MEMORANDUM 35-61 (Internal O/NE Working Paper - CIA
Distribution Only)

SUBJECT: The Dominican Situation

1. The heirs of Trujillo in the Dominican Republic have now run up against the danger to their control of acquiescing in some democratic reform to regain the benefits of respectability abroad. It is certain that the unprecedented outbursts of mob violence -- led by the radical Dominican Popular Movement (MPD) -- and student agitation have rendered more difficult the task of the moderate President Balaguer, who is set on clearing the air for national elections in May 1962. Indeed, the police repression required to check popular disturbances probably has led Ramfis Trujillo, in effect the locus of power in the country, to wonder if he can afford to permit Balaguer to act as freely as in the past. Others of the old guard may now be convinced that Ramfis must eventually adopt the ways of his father.

SECRET/NOFORN

Approved For Release 2005/06/22 : CIA-RDP85T00875R002000190020-4

SECRET/NOFORN

2. Moreover, it is now clear that radical elements have an organized nucleus in the island state, willing to act boldly and with at least some grass roots appeal. The MPD membership like that of the rival opposition Dominican Revolutionary Party (PRD) is still probably small. Nevertheless, it has, under the leadership of pro-Castro and pro-Communist Maximo Lopez Molina, gained a reputation among students and some other urban elements as the most aggressive and courageous anti-regime group. On the other hand, the PRD, comprised mainly of exiles who have been associated with Venezuelan President Betancourt and ex-president Figueres of Costa Rica, is widely criticized for its years of inaction against the tyranny.

3. Although the surfacing of violent opposition is a serious setback to the Trujillo dynasty, the regime's position probably has not yet been jeopardized. Balaguer and Ramfis, who heads the armed forces, have since the death of the elder Trujillo acted intelligently in taking many of the sharp edges off the dictatorship. Those in the military most clearly identified with the Trujillos as well as those at lower levels who fear the situation which might follow their departure appear to stand behind the regime. The sizable moderate opposition, centered in

- 2 -

SECRET/NOFORN

SECRET/NOFORN

the middle class, is still intimidated and afraid to act. The police state mechanism -- though less obtrusive and more respectful of human life, remains intact.

4. Nevertheless, the regime can suppress the opposition only at the risk of tearing down the impression it has gone to some length to foster: that democracy is at hand in the Dominican Republic. New differences on this account probably are developing between Trujillo and the President. The moderate opposition -- disillusioned with the US failure to bring down the late Trujillo and to persuade the OAS watchdog committee to remain in the country -- is becoming impatient to throw its hand in the political arena, but does not want to act without US guarantees.

5. While the far left probably is not an immediate danger to the regime in place, the MPD -- for the moment neutralized by the government -- has by its recent actions demonstrated its potential for mob action and therefore its right to expect some representation in almost any anti-Trujillo opposition. It is already seeking to affiliate with the 14th of June Movement, a small clandestine opposition group with at least some middle class membership.

- 3 -

SECRET/NOFORN

6. There is a good chance that elements in the military may choose to remove the Trujillos and perhaps act on Balaguer's behalf in hopes of preventing a swing toward the extreme left in their country. This would be most likely if the Trujillos, confronted with prolonged demonstrations of popular resentment, attempted to reinstitute the harsh repressive tactics associated with the dead dictator. The danger is that if the military or other moderate elements do not act in time, the energy displayed by those sympathetic with or willing to accept support from Castro may make them the most attractive focal point for the now passive majority element among the politically conscious which favors change.

25X1A



- 4 -

SECRET/NOFORN